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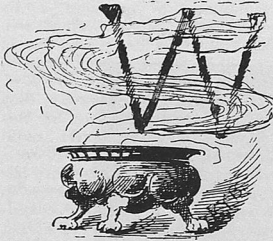
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE BEST ROOM IN A COUNTRY HOUSE.*

BY S. EUGENE SARGENT.



WHILE each one cannot build a home for himself, it is possible in most instances, by judicious expenditure, to marvelously improve existing conditions, and the "best room" is usually the one to which the attention is first directed. It should be handsome enough not to throw discredit on the host in the estimation of his guests, yet not too handsome to be used by the family, even if

there should be a "sitting-room" or library in addition. In too many cases the housewife is afraid to use her parlor except when she has "company," and it remains cold and cheerless in winter, dark and forbidding in the season of birds and flowers. The "best room," therefore, should be actually the best room. It should have a westerly exposure, since the afternoon is unquestionably the part of the day when it will be most frequently occupied; it should, if possible, have a southerly exposure as well; if it have a bow or tower window, so much the better.

The woodwork should be a cherry or light mahogany finish, perfectly oiled and polished. If the room should be much more than twenty feet long, a light lattice of the same color as the woodwork, with a horseshoe opening some six feet in width and eight in height, may be built across, distant from the farther end about one-third of the total length. Behind this lattice should be draped greenish-yellow China silk, as tastefully as possible; the opening may be treated as a doorway. This improvised room may be converted into a music-room or library, leaving the larger division more distinctly for the reception of guests. Few country houses, however, will require this style of treatment.

There will probably be three or more windows, and two doors, one leading into the hall, and one into the library or dining-room. French windows should be made to open outwardly. A lattice, with a Moorish arch in the centre, may be placed at the top of each window, extending down about two feet, and as far in front of the glass as the width of the wall will permit. These may be either the color of the woodwork, or in keeping with the Oriental fondness for brilliant colors, may be decorated with metallic paints *ad libitum*. From a brass rod at the lower edge of each should be hung "Crete" curtains, similar to, but heavier than, Madras, having a whitish ground and a figure principally golden brown or antique pink. These curtains should be doubled over at the top about a foot; to this flap may be attached a band of plush of similar width, of a color approaching most nearly that of the woodwork, which will be some shade of terra cotta, antique pink or golden brown. Where practicable, a window about two feet in height and three feet wide should be placed on the most sunny side, about five feet above the floor. Into this should be fitted a frame containing some twenty-four compartments, four inches square, separated by cherry partitions, having a face width of two inches and a depth of three. Set in each compartment a thick bright yellow glass jewel with a rounded (not cut) surface as near four inches in diameter as possible, and fill in the corners with plain yellow glass. Hang in front of this a China silk curtain of yellow or electric blue, to run on a brass rod.

Remove from the hinges, doors which do not slide. The doorways should be treated with lattices like the windows. Portières of double width, greenish yellow China silk, should be caught back at unequal heights; and on one side only of each doorway should be hung over the silk, reaching to within about three feet of the floor, a plush banneret of full width, hand painted or embroidered in Oriental designs with silver or gold tinsel, having a double row of tinsel fringe along the lower edge. One may be the color of the plush on the window curtains, another electric blue.

The opening of the bay, should there be one, may be treated similarly to the doorways, in which case the windows behind will have "Crete" curtains, but no lattice. Yellow silk French curtains may be used in addition.

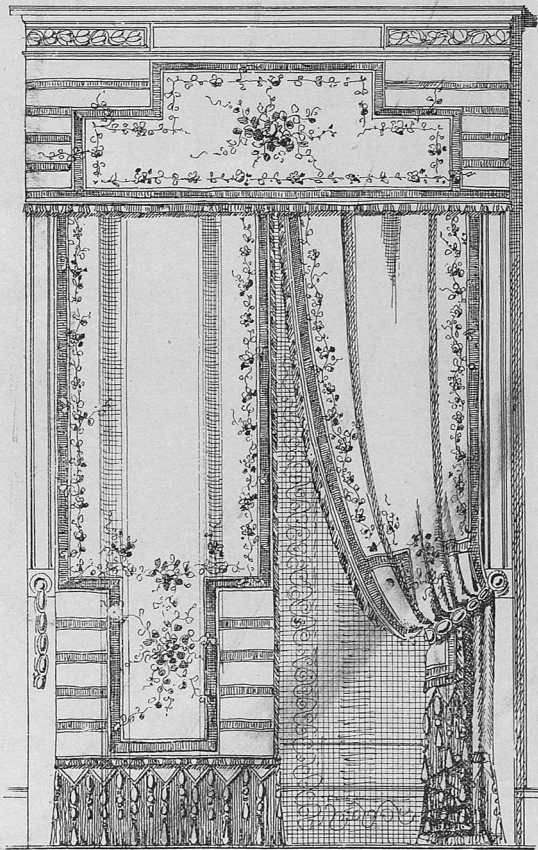
The wall paper should have a cream or very light yellow ground with just a suggestion of gilt; the figure should not be too distinct, and should be of a similar tone, possibly inclining to pinkish, without gilt. This background is especially suitable for pictures. Strive for a soft effect. The frieze should be wide, with a scroll (not flower) pattern, in dull grayish-yellow on a metallic background of pinkish gold or pinkish copper. A gilt or copper picture-molding will be necessary.

* This article was awarded the third prize in the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER competition.

The ceiling should be tinted cream near the windows, gradually deepening into delicate pink at the farther end of the room. Splashes of gilt, somewhat like elongated arrow-heads, may be irregularly laid on, most numerous near the windows. The base of these should be uniformly at an imaginary line distant two feet from the walls and parallel with them. This line may be indicated in gilt where the pink tinting is deepest. The two-foot space should be immaculate. The centre moulding may be treated with a greater variety of color in delicate tints, set off with some metallic paints.

The floor should be of oak, with a plain centre and a tasteful border inlaid with white and red mahogany. The inner edge of the border should not be more than two feet from the wall. The principal rug may be imported or may be a carpet-rug, but something thick and soft should be provided, with a very light ground, and a figure principally delicate pink, blue and brown, or better yet, of a uniform mahogany color.

The floor of the bay should be about six inches above the level of the rest of the room, should have a separate and much



PORTIERE AND VALANCE IN VELOURS, WITH APPLIED ORNAMENT IN ANTIQUE EFFECT. DESIGNED BY P. McHUGH.

narrower border, and, if one has a tiger or leopard skin rug, this is the place for it.

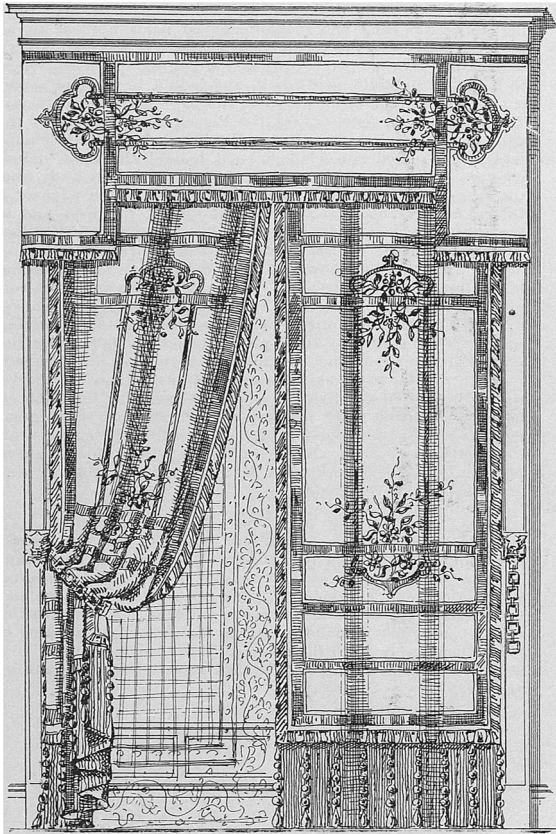
The mantel should be of highly polished cherry, with a beveled edge mirror and one or two shelves for bric-a-brac. The tiles should be glazed, yellow and reddish-brown.

If possible, black walnut and antique oak furniture should be avoided. There should be a tête-à-tête, a large Turkish arm-chair, and a horse-shoe chair, all comfortable. They should be upholstered in plush, arms and back tufted. Each may be of an individual color, harmonizing shades of antique pink, terra cotta and golden brown, for example: the puffs of one may be lemon yellow, and the back of another may be partially of open woodwork. A light pedestal table and a fancy chair of enameled ivory and gilt, the latter with a seat of electric blue plush, will form a pretty contrast to the other furniture. There should be a mahogany table with spiral legs and claw feet. There may also be a Turkish swan upholstered in electric blue or pink plush embroidered lightly in tinsel, and on this should be three or four large square very soft cushions covered with

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China silk, one of which should be greenish-yellow, another may be pink, blue, or golden brown, while one should be partially covered with embroidered plush like that on the swan and finished with silk of a different color. An upright piano, book-case or library desk may be put in this room, according to circumstances.

Gas fixtures should be of hammered copper and brass, and not too heavy; globes or shades may of fancy colors to suit the



PORTIERE AND VALANCE IN VELOURS, WITH METALLIC ORNAMENT. DESIGNED BY P. McHUGH.

taste. If gas is not used, the centre hanging lamp should be of Oriental design, and chosen with care.

The metal work about the mantel will be of brass; also the fire-irons and fender. A metal fire screen, having for subject a dragoon or a background of open net-work, should have a plush curtain fastened to it behind and showing through the meshes; terra-cotta plush behind brass, electric blue behind bronze or copper, yellow behind iron, are good combinations.

For the rest, a Benares brass urn; a large solid yellow vase; a colored Oriental bronze standing on an inlaid Turkish prayer-stool; an Eastern idol, if ugly enough; may be made a prominent factor in the "tone ensemble." Add to this half a dozen scarfs of Oriental stuffs or of home embroidery on bright colored china silks, and we have a room complete as to general effect; each individual injects his or her personality into the minor details of home.

Any one skilled in carpentry may make his own lattice-work by the use of white wood spirals turned with sharp edges like a corkscrew, and of any desired size from a mere thread up to an inch or more in diameter, which are sold in lengths at two or three cents a foot, and may be bent or curved almost infinitely, retaining their position without breaking. This would undoubtedly reduce the expense of decoration; which ought not, however, including furniture, to be much over a thousand dollars.

TO Cleanse Straw Mats.—Rub with flowers of sulphur and a cloth moistened in whisky. When dry brush and coat on wrong side with gum waters.

PAINTING CUPID ON PORCELAIN.

BY ENID BERRS.

BY no other process, according to general consent, can such soft and exquisite flesh tones be produced as by the proper application of mineral paints, when well fired upon porcelain. The many charming designs shown in the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, which seems so well adapted to the use of enamel colors, offer a temptation not to be resisted to suggest the method of treatment whereby they may be utilized by the amateur. Especially pleasing in this connection are the lively little cupids, and other figures frequently given. The following directions may be depended upon as producing perfect results, if well carried out. Experience has shown that too much yellow is often used by china painters to give the pure, clear tones which are really life-like and beautiful; the proportion being in excess of that used by the best artists and decorators.

We will consider then, how to paint a design containing several small figures, and to attain the soft flesh tints which alone would be appropriate for the subject. Such a design would be charming, applied to a rare tile, fancy jug or other ornamental object. Having selected the article to be decorated, it must first be brushed over with spirits of turpentine, which will evaporate rapidly, leaving a slight film that will receive the marks of a pencil readily. The next step is to draw or transfer the design for painting upon the porcelain.

For those desiring a quick and easy method a transferred design may be obtained by laying a piece of thin paper, previously blackened over with a very soft lead pencil, upon the china. Above this place a tracing of the design made upon transparent paper, and arrange it accurately in the position required. By the use of modeling-wax, or similar means, secure



it firmly in place. The lines should now be gone over with the point of a tracer, or even a very coarse pen, or hard lead pencil may be substituted. This will leave the transferred outline upon the surface beneath. India ink and a lining-brush should be used in fixing the design so it will not become obliterated in painting. Carefully going over the whole outline lightly will prepare it to receive the color. This is preferable to using any red water-color, as is often advised; the latter frequently does not burn out in the firing, constituting an objection against its use.

In mixing the flesh tones, it may be well to remember not to depend upon the firing to alter the tint in any great degree.